

FROM THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

Visit our Province website to see photos from the Provincial Chapter. Double click on the pdf icon on the top of the page and it will open up the pictures in a larger version.

<http://www.rshm-nep.org>

BEREAVEMENTS

Our sympathy and prayers are with:

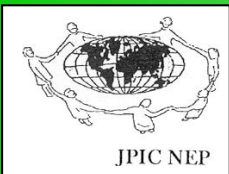
Sr Martin Murray on the death of her sister, **Régine Murray**, who died on 14th November
Sr Monica Gribbin on the death of her sister, **Kathleen Holland**, who died peacefully on 28th November
Sr Nuala Mullins on the death of her sister, **Mrs Kathleen Buckley**, who died on 14th December.
Margaret Pollard (née Barbour) former RSHM on the recent death of her husband, **Ken**.

The Sisters of the Western American Province on the death of **Sister Gabriel McCauley** who died in Orange on 23rd November at the age of 90 years and in the 71st year of her Religious Profession

The Sisters of the Portuguese Province on the deaths of:

Ir Mary Peter Triwedi who died in Braga on 7th December at the age of 78 years and in the 54th year of her Religious Profession

Ir Margarida Maria Gonçalves who died in Fatima on 8th December at the age of 95 years and in the 77th year of her Religious Profession We give thanks for Margarida Maria's leadership as General Superior 1963 - 1975.



AN ADVENT DAY OF RECOLLECTION 26TH NOVEMBER 2012

Dorothy Ward

This was organised by CAFOD: “Living witness: social action and the new evangelization”, a talk given by Gemma Simmonds C.J. *Two points really meant much to me:-*

Making Connections

By juxtaposing pictures she illustrated her points of biblical spirituality with the reality of the present day and our role as religious

- a) A Christmas card Nativity Scene and the reality of a mother in Darfur looking down very pensively, because a few minutes earlier her baby had died.
- b) The Crucified Christ and present day persecuted prisoners.

Mission

We are not here with a mission but we are mission which affects the way we live our lives. Towards the end of the day the latest campaign 'Hungry for Change' was introduced. It is hoped to have a mass lobby of parliament for religious like 'Make Poverty History' on May 15th 2013. CAFOD and about 60 other organisations are campaigning for better food sharing and distribution to give aid to over 1 billion people who are starving as there is enough food produced in the world for everyone.



APT, ACT TO PREVENT TRAFFICKING. *Catherine Dunne*

We continue our awareness raising and Moira McDowall who translated for us at the Chapter is interested in circulating material to parishes through the bishop's Conference. She will be a very helpful contact. Two members of APT spoke in Maynooth College and the photo enclosed describes their response on 18th Oct. European anti-Human Trafficking Day. Open your eyes to see!

Eternal God,

we know you have a special love for the poor and the little ones and defend those whose rights are trampled upon.

Today we focus on people treated unjustly, sold like common merchandise, youngsters, children even, whose lives are valued at less than thirty silver coins.

Merciful and caring God, we believe you will not forget them.

Their names stand written on the palm of your hand.

Make us realise that we, too, have a task in this world where markets decide.

not only the price of coffee but also that of people.

Give us the courage to speak out against injustice and abuse, to stand with your smallest people and denounce all injustice.

in the name of Jesus, your son and our brother....

Amen



Hi Everyone

Hope you are all keeping well and that your Chapter went well. We kept you very much in our prayers in the period leading up to the Chapter.

I just wanted to send you some of our news for the month of October. At the beginning of this month we participated in Missao Urbana (Urban mission). A day long event on the topic of homelessness which started with contributions from a number of people working in the area, a debate and discussion on the topic followed after lunch by speeches on the topic and ending in a very lovely candlelit mass and the participants going out on the streets of Belo Horizonte to speak with people living there. It was attended by about 200 people, many of them young people that we recognised from other meetings such as Novinter and our bible studies course. Throughout the day there was liturgy in the form of singing accompanied by guitar and drums and circle dancing which was very enjoyable and engaging. This was led by Fr. Mirim and there was a very positive atmosphere throughout the day and many interesting contributions made by the speakers and audience.

The following week Fr. Mirim came to the novitiate to give us a short course on liturgy which we found very interesting.

In the third week in October we were visited by Sr. Amiris Vasques who gave us three day's instruction on the values of the Institute. Amiris talked with us about the spirituality of Fr. Gailhac and we discussed the ways in which this spirituality is expressed in our sources and documents. For example, the way it is expressed in the constitutions. We also discussed the practical implications of Gailhac's spirituality in terms of day-to-day religious life and living in community.



Toward the end of the month some of us participated in an outing organised by the coordinator of the Pastoral da Rua (a support centre for homeless people at which the novices volunteer once a month). We accompanied 30 people who attend the centre on a trip to a river about an hour from the city. The picture is of me with some of the novices from other congregations who attended our Novinter.

Karina

A request was received recently from the Foxford Book Club for representatives of the R.S.H.M. to attend a book launch in Foxford, Co. Mayo, as some of our sisters featured in the book. Freda and I attended this launch on Saturday December 8th along with 38 other sisters, 8 priests and one brother. We received a very warm welcome, a huge meal and a very comfortable bed and breakfast! The Bishop of the Diocese came for Mass and present also were the Bishop of the Church of Ireland and the local Church of Ireland priest, Andrea Wills who features in the book. It was truly a wonderful evening. The book is to acknowledge and remember the 103 members of the local community who had left home to join religious congregations or the seminary and who had served in many parts of the world. Twelve of them were present on Saturday evening. We were very proud to have 7 of our sisters from the Foxford area in the book: **Srs Benignus Coleman,**

Emily Gaughan,

Lawrence McHale,

Rita McNulty,

Josephine O'Hara,

Bernard Thornton all EAP

and our own **Mary Walsh.**

All the research was done by a local retired businessman, Michael Staunton, and the writing completed by the editor of the local newspaper, James Laffey. In his introduction to the book and in his speech on Saturday James gave great tribute to the religious named in the book and to all religious everywhere.

The past two decades have been increasingly difficult for the Catholic Church as a series of scandals and institutional failings have laid siege to a once impenetrable institution. Sadly, the great work of individual priests and nuns has become drowned in a tsunami of negative headlines and corrosive criticism.

'Labourers in the Vineyard' is a timely reminder of the remarkable work undertaken by the religious in Ireland and overseas. Visionary priests and sisters contributed to every aspect of society and displayed a selflessness and generosity of spirit that was simply inspirational. Such achievements will stand the test of time. In the most distant parts of the world there are churches, hospitals and schools built by priests and sisters.

Freda and I were very impressed to learn that the famous Foxford Woollen mills had been started by a sister of Charity in 1892 and is still a thriving business today.

Our trip to the West was an experience to remember and we were so happy we were part of this wonderful community for a short time.

A BRIDGE TO POOR PEOPLE IN CHINA *Madeleine Fitzpatrick*

The Chinese Province of the Congregation of the Mission (CM) invited the leadership of the AIC - 'Auxiliatrice Internationale de Charite' and the VMY - Vincentian Movement for Youth, both of the Vincentian Family 'to come and see', particularly to meet poor women and youth in China, with the hope that hearts would be touched, and that both the AIC and VMY would be present and active in China in the future.

The remarkable rise to power of China on the global stage in the last quarter of a century has replaced the image of China treasured in the hearts and imaginations of many Religious since the middle of the nineteenth century. So now it was time to come and meet the ordinary and poor people of China, people with whom the Vincentian Family and RSHM can feel perfectly at home. We met them and their faces, smiles and laughter, tears too, became embedded in the imaginations and hearts in each of us.



The pilgrimage began in Hong Kong, where the Vincent de Paul Society, which has 30 active and dynamic conferences, introduced the group to some of their work in Hong Kong. They explained the conditions for their initiatives in mainland China. Coming in contact with the vitality of the Church in Hong Kong, particularly in its social outreach was great to experience.

In Beijing, we got in touch with the Vincentian story by visiting the four historic churches, commonly known as the North, South, East and West churches. The group attended the Sunday morning mass. It was in Chinese. The church was full, the liturgy vibrant, beautifully celebrated.

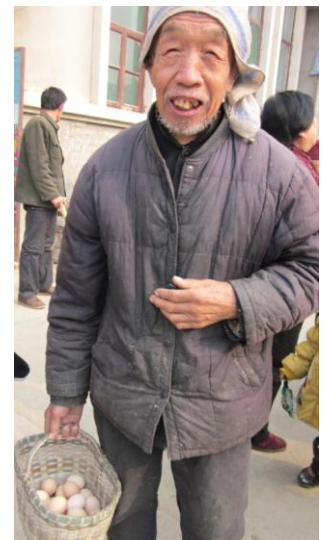
In our travels north we met many wonderful Chinese people, young and old, many very poor. It was meeting and being with the people that made all the difference. They must have sensed we were happy to be with them, because on every occasion they welcomed us warmly.

One of our goals was to understand as much as we could about the lives of the people. We learned about their care of the elderly, by visiting two homes for the elderly staffed by sisters and carers, where the care was warm and personal, and the elderly fully alive. It was a joy to be with them. Both of these homes were supported by 'Catholic charities' outreach. On one occasion also we met some elderly people in their 'homes' living in deep poverty.

The A.I.C., V.M.Y. and I were especially eager to know about the lives and challenges of women and young people. We were fortunate that on several occasions the women and young people we met shared their stories, their hopes, pain and experiences with the group. One woman shared that she was the only one in her family who was Catholic and her family did not approve of her outreach to others in need. Her courage to do so in the face of this kind of "loneliness" was a beautiful example of real 'faith and good works'.

In the end, people made all the difference. The Chinese have a saying, "At home rely on your parents and family and outside rely on your friends."

At the moment the outcome of our visit is open-ended. However, we do know that our visit went beyond all that we had imagined. The Chinese Province of the Congregation of the Mission hopes to continue what it sees as its mission to introduce the Vincentian Family and others to the life of people, particularly poor people, in China.



*May the peace and joy
of the
Christmas Season
be with you all
and
may 2013
bring you many blessings.*

*Go raibh síocháin agus
luthgáir na féile seo
go doimhin in bhur gcroí
agus go mbraithaigh sibh
Beannachtaí agus miorúilti Dé
i rith na bliana seo cughainn*

*Que la paix et la joie
de ce
Temps de Noël
soient avec chacune de vous
et que 2013
vous comble de bénédictions.*

*With love and best wishes
From
The Provincial Team*

